

Town of Wenham
Finance & Advisory Committee
Board of Selectmen
Meeting of January 22, 2014
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Committee members, a Joint Meeting of the Finance & Advisory Committee and the Wenham Board of Selectmen was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 6:30 P.M. in the Selectmen Chambers. This meeting was recorded with permission by HWCAM.

Abbreviations used:

FAC Finance & Advisory Committee
BOS Board of Selectmen
TA Town Administrator
FY Fiscal Year

Public Information:

Minutes January 15, 2014
FY15 Draft Budget
Police Department– Accreditation information
Fire Department
Department of public works
Water Department
General Government / Inspectional Services
Council on Aging

Call Meeting to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Lucy called the FAC meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Committee Members Present: Michael Lucy, Chair; Hilliard Ebling, Kevin Lech, Kathryn Mansfield, Jeff Fotta, Rick Quinn

With a quorum present, Chairman Whittaker called the BOS meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Selectmen Present: Selectmen Ken Whittaker, Chair; Patrick Wilson, Vice Chair; Jack Wilhelm, Secretary

Also Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator; David Genereux, Finance Director; Baystate Municipal Accounting Group; Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

The Committee received new, updated budget binder books at the beginning of this meeting.

Minutes – January 15, 2014

Vote: Mr. Fotta moved, and it was seconded to approve the FAC meeting minutes of January 15, 2014. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Presentation to the Wenham Finance Committee and the Wenham Board of Selectmen

Selectman Whittaker initiated a discussion regarding the new format of the overall budget with the consolidation and / or reallocation of smaller budgets in an effort to streamline the budget as a simpler way of understanding and processing.

It was noted that some voters, at last year's annual town meeting, objected to not seeing the independent line items in Article 1. Mr. Lucy observed that the format has no impact on the actual budget, but allows department heads to manage their departments more efficiently and use the approved funding in other areas of their department budget if needed. After a brief discussion, it was the consensus to vote on the format at the end of the budget process. Residents were encouraged to identify any concerns / questions with the BOS, FAC, or the Town Administrator.

Mr. Andrews reviewed that the Governor filed a State Budget late this afternoon; this is not the final budget and will be going through the House and Senate.

Mr. Andrews said that the proposed FY 2015 budget was conservative and included:

- Two percent cost of living for non-union personal
- Expense budgets level funded or reduced
- Land Acquisition fund proposed at \$25,000
- OPEB funded at \$50,000
- Capital requests reduced to \$203,000

Mr. Genereux said that discussions with the School Superintendents regarding the school budget continue; a tentative placeholder was used for all the school budgets, including the HWRSD, and the Vocational School.

The Revenue Sheet was reviewed and placeholders identified.

- DOR has certified the Town's Free Cash at \$797,000; Free Cash proposed to be used to level the FY 2015 tax rate is \$600,000, subject to further review in the budget process. Only certified cash can be used to level the tax rate.
- If the draft budget does not change from the current working proposal, the FY 2015 tax rate would be \$19.40. This is an increase of \$.52 over the FY 2014 tax rate (\$18.88), or an increase of approximately \$262 per household on the average tax bill of \$9,785 based on the median property evaluation of \$504,400.

It was noted that the Penguin Hall project is not going forward and Mr. Mullen is actively marketing the property.

Department Budget Presentations

Police

Liaison- Jeff Fotta

Police Chief Perkins and Captain Jeff Tobey were present. Chief Perkins presented the Police Department budget and answered questions.

Capital requests in the police budget included a front line patrol cruiser. Chief Perkins elaborated on the necessity for the vehicle citing cruisers idle 20 hours a day, and adds to the wear, and increases maintenance costs. The FY16 budget will include the replacement of the other front line vehicle. There are no vehicle requests planned for FY 2017. Chief Perkins went on to say that, the Commonwealth increased mandatory officer training and this expense is reflected in the salary budget. He reiterated that although the Accreditation Process is done every three years, the information must be kept current and is maintained regularly.

The Administration did not recommended the funding for a fingerprint scanner (\$20,400) but the Chief noted that this piece of equipment would be necessary in the near future.

Fire

Liaison – Mike Lucy

Fire Chief Blanchard and Deputy Chief Stephen Kavanagh were present.

Chief Blanchard reviewed the Capital Request in the budget for the replacement of six protective gear sets, five breathing apparatus, and the lease of two vehicles. This is the first year the full time employee, and the chief's salary is included in the budget.

Chief Blanchard went on to talk about the aging fire pumper saying it would need to be replaced in the next year or two. This is a substantial expense at \$400,000 and takes about a year to build once the order is placed. This prompted Mr. Lucy to suggest additional discussion should include exploring the possibility of sharing this engine (and future large scale/expensive fire apparatus with the town of Hamilton; Chief Blanchard was asked to research this matter and report back to the FAC in the future.

The Fire Department continues to seek grant opportunities.

Chief Blanchard cautioned that although the “on call wages” were level funded, calls are up 17 percent from last year at this time and this budget may need to be adjusted.

In response to a question from Mr. Fotta, Chief Blanchard supported the concept that research be pursued regarding the Town having and operating their own ambulance service. He noted that more than 50 percent of the WFD's calls are medical.

Department of Public Works

Liaison Rick Quinn

DPW Director Bill Tyack and Mark Gates were present. Mr. Tyack presented a level funded budget.

The Capital request included a one-year lease of a new one-ton Chevy pickup truck with plow. This replaces a 12-year-old vehicle. Mr. Tyack stated he continues to work with the Hamilton DPW to share equipment and reduce costs. The other capital cost is to supplement (state) Chapter 90 money (road work).

The leaf collection program was a part of the budget discussion. Mr. Tyack stated he budget \$35,000 annually for leaf pickup, not including capital costs. He cautioned that the leaf pickup equipment is aging; the vacuum is 16 years old and is mounted on a 24-year-old truck.

The DPW budget includes:

- Refuse – This is year three of a five-year contract. The Town has seen a reduction of tipping fees with increased recycling
- Cemetery
- Snow & Ice – Given the recent winter weather, he anticipated exceeding the appropriation for the FY 2014 Snow & Ice budget within a month. The appropriate documents will be sent to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator for review and consideration. Street lighting – discussions continue about possible savings by purchasing light poles and using LED bulbs

Water

Liaison Kevin Lech

Water Superintendent, Erik Mansfield was present and said he was able to decrease the Water Department Budget. He reported that energy efficient upgrades were made on the pump house motors.

Mr. Mansfield talked about water management and that the state is expected to change the water withdrawal limits on the permits. Currently the limit is 61 gallons of water per person per day.

New developments in town are restricted and cannot put in town supplied irrigation systems.
A leak detection survey is done biannually.

General Government, Inspectional Services, Board of Health

Liaison: Hilly Ebling. Mary Morrow, Permitting/ Inspectional Services

Emily Cademartori, Planner & Land Use Coordinator

This budget includes the initial \$25,000 for the start of a land acquisition fund. This differs from CPA funds that are restricted for the use of open space only.

Mr. Andrews explained that after the job descriptions were completed last year, The Planner/Land Use Coordinator salary was found to be low and it was the recommendation of the Administration to increase the salary by \$4,500. He went on to say that the Permitting Coordinator position was made full time in anticipation of increased activity for Penguin Hall. Although the Penguin Hall project is no longer going forward, another large project for the property may be planned, and new growth continues.

Mr. Andrews is considering that the Permitting Coordinator be shared with the Assessors as part of a flexible staffing program initiated at town hall. The emphasis is on flexible positions and reduced costs, if possible. He reviewed the cost savings found by merging positions through salary and benefits savings but also reducing future OPEB obligations

Council on Aging (COA)

Liaison Rick Quinn

Jim Reynolds, COA Director was present and talked about meeting the needs of the senior (over 60) population in Wenham, noting that fifty percent of the seniors in town are between 60 and 69 years of age. His goal is to build a foundation to support all senior groups in town.

The COA budget for FY 2015 is level funded.

Mr. Reynolds said although the joint van service with Hamilton stopped, transportation continues to be provided to Wenham's senior residents.

Other matters, as may not have been reasonably anticipated by the Chair (discussion only)

It was noted there were none.

Adjournment

Vote; Mr. Wilson moved the BOS adjourn at 9:40 PM and it was unanimous to do so.

Vote: Mr. Fotta moved the FAC adjourn at 9:40 Pm and it was unanimous to do so.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley

TA follows up items

- School enrollment numbers
Relay to Vocational Tech that their budget numbers would be appreciated before Feb 26-- Done
- Average lifetime for breathing apparatus -- Chief Blanchard
- Pros and cons (and if it compliant with MA laws) to share fire truck with Hamilton -- Chief Blanchard
- Provide a three-to-five year capital revolving plan—David Genereux
- Information on the details of having ambulance service pros/cons/cost/revenue -- Chief Blanchard